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ABSTRACT

Part IV of the proceedings includes five presentations. They are: "Pitfalls in Teaching Business Language Courses and How to Avoid Them" (Margit Resch); "Achieving Active Student Participation in the Business Foreign Language Course" (John Holley); "Business Language Components for Various Levels of Foreign Language Study" (Carole A. Head); "Moving from Vocabulary Acquisition to Functional Proficiency: Techniques and Strategies" (Hazel Cramer and Susan Terrio); and "The Foreign Language Business Course: Varying the Activities and Assignments" (Emily Spinelli). (MSE)

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE 1984 EMU CONFERENCE ON FOREIGN LANGUAGES FOR BUSINESS AND THE PROFESSIONS

PART IV:

CLASSROOM TECHNIQUES

Geoffrey M. Vaught, Ed.

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PITFALLS IN TEACHING BUSINESS LANGUAGE COURSES AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

Margit Resch

Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures
University of South Carolina
Columbia, S. C. 29208

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Pitfalls in Teaching Business Language Courses and How to Avoid Them

A colleague was interrogated by her dean about the objectives of her commercial Spanish course. She took a deep breath and began to outline her goals: "I am trying to inform the students about business practices in Spain and Spanish speaking countries in Latin America. The texts are selected to this end and cover banking, management, industry and production, marketing, international finance and trade, labor relations, accounting, economic geography, transportation..." Before she could finish her list of topics, the dean expressed his bewilderment about the course content, wondering whether he was laboring under a false assumption when he thought that she was actually a language teacher. "Oh, naturally, we are also developing the four language skills: listening and reading comprehension, speaking and writing." The dean was duely impressed, but with an air of sarcasm he inquired whether she had any other ambitions. "Yes," she answered, "I do, and I hope to realize them someday. I want to throw an egg into an electric fan!"

This little anecdote, comical as it may be, is actually quite revealing. Teaching a business language course is, indeed, a complex and, at times, an overwhelming task. Our lack of training in the discipline of international business impairs our confidence as teachers. The multitude of objectives, as indicated above, is not only impossible to accomplish, but often obstructs a clear view of what is essential and, thus, frustrates our attempts to set priorities. It is not coincidental, I am sure, that the teacher listed as primary course goals a series of business topics, while development of language skills was mentioned in passing. The emphasis in our course designs, as well as in current textbooks, seems to be on the realm of business as we perceive it, rather than on pedagogically sound strategies for developing language skills.

A typical syllabus and almost all textbooks reflect this preoccupation with information about business rather than linguistic content: both syllabus and table of contents outline a host of business topics, but rarely address themselves to grammatical items or systematic practice of certain language skills.

We certainly need to cover a broad spectrum of the prevalent business conventions of a given foreign country. Yet, we need to ask ourselves what is more important in a language classroom: the content of the material or the acquisition of language skills. The teacher who argued that she had no time for conversation because there was so much business material to cover in order to prepare the students for a certain standardized exam leading toward a business language diploma, has, in my opinion, lost sight of the most urgent objective in business language classes: mastery of the language. Actually, the texts and materials should be selected, first and foremost, on the basis of their usefulness towards this end. We are not trained and do not have the time to cover adequately all aspects of business. Therefore, it is imperative that we equip the students with the linguistic tools that will enable them to obtain on their own the information that we have to omit in the classroom and that they may eventually need. If we want students to achieve the necessary expertise to inform themselves about specific aspects of business and to communicate in any business setting in the foreign language, we need to place emphasis on the improvement of language skills.

In the following, I will address myself to two of our tasks as language teachers: development of reading and speaking skills. If I ignore writing, it is mainly for reasons of place constraints. However, I must admit, tongue in cheek, that I consider writing of minor consequence for the international business major as he or she will probably, having climbed the corporate ladder

to a managerial position, delegate any kind of written communication to his or her secretary...

Particularly in business language courses, we tend to practice reading and speaking with distinctly different materials because a theoretical text on business concepts does not seem to lend itself to oral communication. Who would ever convers about, say, elementary contractual rights and liablities? Such material is, for good reasons, simply used for reading purposes, and subject matters more conducive to oral practice are chosen for speaking. This approach is not necessarily practical and economical within the framework of an instructional unit as it imposes giant leaps from one topic to another and does not allow for thorough internalization and active mastery of any given subject matter. However, there are ways and means of utilizing a reading text of any kind for dynamic conversation, and I would like to acquaint you with some strategies to practice both the reading and speaking skills on the basis of one and the same text.

Let us first consider some aspects of reading. The literature on this subject is abundant, but although exciting and effective strategies for teaching and checking reading comprehension have been devised, actual classroom instruction is still willfully inadequate. The most prevalent method continues to be translating a text into the native tongue, in spite of the generally accepted notion that translation has very little to do with reading, in fact, is often an obstacle to comprehension.[1] We have all experienced the general frustration when a student comes up with a rendition such as: "Retail: He is the last member in the trade chain and gives his wares in small crowds to the consumer." And when the teacher inquires about the meaning of this nonsense, the student will respond: Well, this is what it says here. Of course, he translated literally a text that actually said: "Retail is the last link in the

marketing chain and sells small quantities of merchandise to the consumer."[2] If the student had read the text for the purpose of comprehension rather than translation, he would surely have deciphered this sentence from the context and circumscribed its meaning in comprehensible words.

Translation, by its very nature, requires precise knowledge of the meaning of every lexical item. Reading for comprehension does not. We do not need to be familiar with every word in a text in order to be able to understand it. Let me demonstrate to you that verbs, for instance, at least in written material, are not necessarily "meaning-carrying" elements, as one reading specialist claims who likes to teach reading through "recognition of distinctive features at the syntactic level."[3] I want to prove to you that it is not necessary to know the exact meaning of a verb to grasp the meaning of the sentence, that, at least in a business text, verbs are, in fact, rather superfluous. In the following text, fill the blanks with an appropriate verb:

Merrill Lynch _____ a hefty price - and perhaps _____ a dangerous precedent - to _____ the Baldwin-United monkey off its back. The monkey in question _____ Baldwin's single-premium deferred annuity, a hot product that _____ to _____ investor's money at top speed. Nobody _____ more annuities than Merrill Lynch brokers, who _____ $30 million in commissions by _____ some 40,000 of them, at a cost to the firm's customers of about $700 million. After Baldwin _____ to _____ last year, the courts _____ the assets of its insurance units. Unable to _____ at their savings without court approval, annuity holders _____ Merrill Lynch offices and _____ lawyers all over the US. Fearful of long and costly litigation,

Merrill Lynch's board _____ unanimously to _____ the annuities into Merrill Lynch obligations.[4]

As you can see, the correct context can be established without knowing the verb. That your choice of verb does not always coincide with the original does in no way impair the accurate comprehension of the text.

On the other hand, knowing the verb is helpful to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar nouns. Fill with nouns the blanks of text (2) dealing with the social responsibility of the management of a company:

If _____ are to survive, they must make meaningful _____ to the _____ in which they operate. In the United States, _____ are generally free to satisfy the _____ of _____ by producing _____ and _____ of their own choosing. Yet, social _____ and _____ still serve to restrict and limit the _____ available to each _____.[5]

Again, your choice of elements may not match the original, but most likely you established a meaningful context that approximates satisfactorily the original. Exercises such as these simulate the situation of a student attempting to decipher a text in a foreign language. Many lexical elements may be unfamiliar to him, equivalent to blanks. However, more than likely, he knows many noun or verb phrases, thus, making it easier for him to fill the remaining blanks, so to speak, than it was for you who, in this case, had no noun, respectively verb clues. Actually, these exercises can be used in class, in English or in the foreign language, to prove to the students that comprehension does not require the knowledge of every single word, no matter in which language the text is written.

Of course, syntactical analysis of a sentence is a helpful tool for reading comprehension if a text segment cannot be unraveled by way of its lexic and

through inference. And which teacher is not gratified when the student has correctly located the subject! However, since I. M. Schlesinger demonstrated, as early as 1968, that the method of decoding a sentence does not substantially assist the reading comprehension process,[6] his theory has been verified in many different studies,[7] and we may well be wasting valuable time by insisting on careful syntactical analysis.

Instead, we want to use our time for speaking; and filling the "blanks" with proper words affords ample opportunity for discussion. Different possibilities can be weighed and assessed - in the foreign language. Arguments can be formulated for or against a certain choice. And in the process of coming to terms with the terminology, we are actively working with and, thus, reinforcing the vocabulary of the text. Moreover, at the same time, we are learning to express ourselves about the subject matter.

There are many other ways of accomplishing this goal. The usual questions-about-the-text method is not one of them, regardless of whether those questions are in the foreign language or in English. Consider text (3) and the questions typically devised for reading checks and conversation exercises:

> International bankers are in a froth over Citibank's refusal to repay about $550 million of maturing US dollar deposits in its Manila branch. Attracted in part by high interest rates, the biggest depositors include Japanese and Canadian banks... Citibank says that paying them off would violate foreign exchange controls slapped on by the Philippines last fall.[8]

a) Who is in a froth?

b) What is attracting Japanese and Canadian banks?

c) What would be the consequence of paying the depositors off?

d) When did the Philippines slap on foreign exchange controls?

Even if you did not know the language, you would probably be able to pick out the subject after which the first question inquires. And most of the other questions can easily be answered without really comprehending the text. Therefore, this method is not adequate to generate or check comprehension. Neither does it inspire conversation. As soon as those questions are answered, probably by mindlessly reiterating the text verbatim, communication is terminated.

Let us consider some alternatives to practicing reading and speaking simultaneously. Take the following text:

> Decision making is important in all managment activities. In fact, the management functions could not be performed if _____ _____. As a process, decision making refers to the selection of one action from a number of alternatives available for solving a problem. In this sense, _____ _____ are u3ß examples of decision making.
>
> The decision making process is composed of four basic steps:
>
> 1)_____
>
> 2)_____
>
> 3)analyzing alternatives in terms of their preceived consequences
>
> 4)_____[9]

In groups, the students are to read the text and help each other decipher its meaning. No English is allowed. There are several ways to fill the blanks. The actual text pieces can be listed, in scrambled fashion, on the bottom of the page and the students have to locate the proper one for each blank:

a) and determining retail prices
b) determining alternatives
c) if decisions were not made
d) hiring new employes
e) selecting a course of action
f) adding a new product to existing lines
g) defining the problem

Each choice requires a verbal justification, for instance: "Hiring a new employee is an example of decision making. The manager must decide which one of the applicants to employ." Or: "In order to be able to make a decision, you first have to define the problem. Defining the problem is the first step."

An alternative, which does not provide the missing parts and is, therefore, more apt to elicit lively conversation, is a group discussion in which the students are to speculate on the ideas omitted and generate statements that would adequately complete the sentence and round off the context. This presupposes some knowledge about the subject matter or simply common sense, depending on the nature of the text. The group members will propose and, subsequently defend, their ideas for filling the blanks and discuss which suggestions best fit the context. After extensive group work, the different proposals can be assessed by the entire class, giving opportunity for review and reinforcement of the material. The suggestions that approximate the original should receive special laudations.

For both exercises, the reading passage has to be thoroughly understood or else the task of filling the blanks to produce sensical statements cannot be accomplished. In my experience, the students find this aprroach to reading challenging and they really labor to comprehend the text, which is not always the case with more conventional methods where the students are inclined to simply ignore what they do not understand, and where they can get away with it. With this technique, it is imperative that they understand the text. Moreover, to arrive at a consensus in the face of various possibilites, the group members

will have to engage in a meaningful verbal exchange which often times proceeds to heated but fruitful arguments, even over short and modest texts such as the one above. Such discussions are infinitely more interesting and productive in terms of developing oral facilities than answering dead-end questions about the text. Furthermore, since this approach requires active contemplation of the subject matter and creative solutions to each given problem, students tend to learn the concepts better and commit the material to long-term memory.

Another interesting method to inspire thorough reading and subsequent conversation is the Humpty-Dumpty method. Divide a text into several components and scramble them up. The students' task is to reproduce the original by rearranging the given parts. Put the following text segments in a logical sequence or, in nursery rhyme words, put them back together again:

1) Such concerns have sent the Dow Jones industrial average plummeting 110 points in the past month.

2) Said Walter Heller, who was chief economic adviser to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson:

3) First the recovery took off far more powerfully than nearly all experts had expected.

4) At a meeting last week in Manhattan, the members of TIME's Board of Economists foresaw continued growth this year,

5) From the start, the rebound from the grinding 1981-82 recession has been filled with sharp suprises.

6) "The expansion won't peter out, but will peter down."

7) Now the prospect of further giant federal deficits is raising fears that the upturn may abruptly end.

8) but predicted that the recovery's pace would slow.[10]

Almost total comprehension is a prerequisite to reproduce the original. Each time a sequential order is established, the students have to provide a justification. In the process of rearranging the segments, ample opportunity is given for extensive discussions about the material, both conceptual and syntactical - if sentences were broken up.

Such methods demand close reading and careful selection of texts on the part of the teacher, because not all texts lend themselves to such exercises. The Humpty-Dumpty method only works with a text that is logically structured, which is, unfortunately, not always the case with business texts, especially articles in newspapers and magazines. Filling-in blanks requires well written materials that address themselves to the point, develop it clearly and do not take off on a tangent, so that speculation about the omitted materials can focus on the problem at hand.

While devising such exercises takes time, the results are well worth the effort. But there are other strategies that do not require elaborate preparations, yet, force the students to try to understand the text.[11] For instance, a text can be handed out that is not divided into paragraphs. The task, then, is to analyze the logic of the text and structure it visually in such a way as to reflect its internal organization. These paragraphs could be given appropriate headings that are either provided by you, scrambled-up fashion, or have to be devised by the students themselves.

Texts that contain a wealth of statistics, dealing, for instance, with economic growth, can easily be illustrated with corresponding graphs - most classes love such activities. Though by their very nature non-verbal, such activities are by no means frivolous, because in order to produce such charts, thorough understanding of the text is necessary.

And all the while, the students, working in groups, have to explain the reasons for their way of manipulating the text and communicate about every step of their current activity. Thus, they are forced to use the vocabulary actively and they tend to absorb the material, even if they are only modestly motivated and prone to learning by way of osmosis rather than diligent and active acquisition.

Such strategies may have found and will continue to find their way into the classroom. First and foremost, however, they should be employed by the authors of textbooks (that we so direly need), authors who seem to steadfastly cling to the notion that reading and speaking (and for that matter, writing) are separate activities to be conducted separately with distinctly different materials. Let us hope that these authors will begin to create or emulate didactically more innovative teaching stratagems and discontinue the stifling practice of providing a text with the usual series of demeaning and uninspiring who-done-it-when-where-how-why-and-to-whom questions.

FOOTNOTES

1 Ralph W. Ewton, "Reading vs. Translation," German Quarterly, 42, Jan. 1969, pp. 126-127.

2 Harald Walter Braun, "Functional Skills for German in Business and Economy: A Curricular Guide and Materials for the Teaching of Business German," Diss. Stonybrook 1980, p. 227: "Der Einzelhandel: Er ist das letzte Glied in der Handelskette und gibt die Waren in kleinen Mengen...an die Verbraucher ab."

3 Bruce A. Beatie, "Developing Reading Skills in German: An Unorthodox Approach," ed. Helm Faber and Manfred Heid, Lesen in der Fremdsprache (Munich, 1981), p. 22f.

4 "Birk's Bailout," Fortune, 20 February 1984, p. 6:

> "Merrill Lynch is paying a hefty price - and perhaps setting a dangerous precedent - to get the Baldwin-United monkey off its back. The monkey in question is Baldwin's single-premium deferred annuity, a hot product that promised to compound investors' money at top speed. Nobody peddled more annuities than Merrill Lynch brokers, who collected $30 million in commissions by selling some 40,000 of them, at a cost to the firm's customers of about 700 million. After Baldwin began to topple last year, the courts froze the assets of its insurance units. Unable to get at their savings without court approval, annuity holders have picketed Merrill Lynch offices and lined up lawyers all over the US. Fearful of long and costly litigations, Merrill Lynch's board voted unanimously to convert the annuities into Merrill Lynch obligations."

5 Trewart and Newport, Management: Functions and Behavior (Dallas, 1977), p. 8:

"If organizations are to survive, they must make meaningful contributions to the society in which they operate. In the United States, business enterprises are generally free to satisfy the needs of society by producing goods and services of their own choosing. Yet, the social values and norms still serve to restrict and limit the alternatives available to each organization."

6 I. M. Schlesinger, Sentence Structure and the Reading Process (The Hague, 1968).

7 Kenneth Goodman, "Decoding - from Code to What?," Journal of Reading, 14 (1971), 455-462.

David LaBerge, Basic Processes in Reading: Perception and Comprehension (New York, 1977).

8 "Chiller in Manila," Fortune, 20 February 1984, p. 7.

9 Trewart and Newport, op. cit., 50:

"Decision making is important in all management activities. In fact, the management functions could not be performed if decisions were not made. As a process, decision making refers to the selection of one action from a number of alternatives available for solving a problem. In this sense, hiring new employees, adding a new product to existing lines, and determining retail prices are examples of decision making.

The decision making process is composed of four basic steps: (1) defining the problem; (2) determining the alternatives; (3) analyzing alternatives in terms of their perceived consequences; and (4) selecting a course of action."

10 "Still Sighting Favorable Signs," Time, 27 February 1984, p. 72. Correct sequence: 5-3-7-1-4-8-2-6.

11 Rosemarie Buhlmann, "Das Lesen von Fachtexten," Lesen in der Fremdsprache, ibid., 55-124, offers a wealth of suggestions regarding reading check mechanisms for scientific texts.

Margit Resch

University of South Carolina

ACHIEVING ACTIVE STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN THE BUSINESS FOREIGN LANGUAGE COURSE

John Holley

Department of Foreign Languages
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, VA 23508

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Foreign language teachers who find themselves faced with the responsibility for developing a so-called "business" course in a foreign language share a set of well-known task-related problems. Whether such teachers come to this responsibility of their own accord or have it thrust upon them by senior members of the department who give their blessings but little else to the project has no bearing on the scope or magnitude of the problems that lie ahead. For in almost every case the teachers who undertake to design and offer a business foreign language course are themselves trained humanists, i.e. ones who are at home in the subtleties of textual criticism in the literary journals they read and possibly contribute to, but who also feel somewhat uncomfortable with terms like "Dow Jones" and "export subvention." But it is a very small source of comfort indeed to suspect that we are all subject to the same feelings of uneasiness. Misery may love company, but it is a short-lived diversion at best when the company merely serves to remind us of the problem. This paper will examine some of the causes of our shared uneasiness and offer workable, practical suggestions for dealing with them.

My topic is the achieving of active student participation in the business foreign language course, and so one might well ask at this point why this paper is starting off by addressing teacher insecurity. What does that have to do with getting students involved? In fact, it has everything to do

with getting students involved. The atmosphere in the classroom will either make our goal of student involvement possible, or it will preclude it. And a most important ingredient of the classroom atmosphere is the self-confidence of the teacher. Anyone who has ever entered the classroom with forebodings of doom knows from first-hand experience the meaning of "a self-fulfilling prophecy." Let us then consider the three major contributors to insecurity for the teacher of the business foreign language course and then look at a simple, realistic design for a course that will replace insecurity with confidence and fear with fun.

What, then, are the fears that can erode confidence and preclude the creation and control of a classroom atmosphere that promotes the learning process? If we recall the first impressions we had when perusing the materials available for the business foreign language course, we may also remember that "sinking feeling" that went along with those impressions. Not only was the vocabulary new, the concepts were, and to some extent will probably remain, nothing short of alien. None of those nice philosophical terms appropriate to a discussion of Don Quixote or Faust will do here. For all their beauty, they are simply out of place and must be left behind. Our next impression could be compared to the awe Abraham felt when contemplating the night sky. The depth and breadth of the field encompassed by the innocuous little

word "business" in its adjectival or substantive uses is just overwhelming. The final impression and third contributor to teacher insecurity grows out of the first two. If we feel alienated by the subject matter and overwhelmed by its vastness, we will certainly begin to dread the moment we must stand before a group of students who believe they have every right to expect us to know it all. How can we be creative and stimulating in the classroom under these circumstances? Will this course give new dimension to the terms "dry" and "pedantic"? After all, just how exciting is, for example,the business section of the newspaper to the average citizen? Even Dan Rather has more sense that to jeopardize the popularity of the evening news by giving more than a nod to the daily stock market report. Newness, vastness and dryness, the triple threat guaranteed to give sweaty palms to even the most experienced of teachers. How can we neophites in the area of foreign languages for business and the professions avoid getting in over our heads, floundering, and failing in our efforts to provide a college-level educational experience? The answer is not necessarily simple, but the answer that will be suggested here is workable and fun, and, what it more, anyone can use it successfully.

The key to success in this course is, not surprisingly, the same as for any other course. The objectives of the course must be realistic, realizable, and clear. Although

this course is not conceived of as being a beginning-level foreign language course (in fact, the students should have had two to three years of the foreign language at the college level), it is a beginning business foreign language course, and the assumption should be that the students are as new to the field as they would be to the study of Golden Age Spanish literature. No one familiar with the field of Spanish literature would expect an undergraduate course in the Golden Age to do any more than provide the students with an introduction, a "leg up," as it were, into the field. The objectives would be to make the students aware of the period through first-hand involvement with some of its representative works. The hope would be that the students would gain respect for an important cultural achievement and become familiar with some of its significant ideas and their expression in literature. The objectives would be realistic, given the time alloted and the previous preparation of the students. They would be considered realizable, perhaps even modest, but no less worthwhile for that, given the richness and scope of the field in question. These practical objectives should be clear in the mind of the teacher, and they should be made clear to the students as well.

The professional humanist knows well enough how to go about planning the objectives of a genre or period course in literature, and we may, indeed ought to apply the same

criteria in our planning of a business foreign language course. Such a course can, in all honesty, be no more than an introduction to the language and concepts informing an important dimension of contemporary culture, namely the world of commerce. Given the scope of this field, this is indeed a modest proposal, but it is also an honest and useful one and clearly analogous to the time-honored approach to humanistic studies. Planning a business foreign language course with this in mind goes a long way toward taking the edge off the uneasiness stemming from the newness and vastness of the field as a whole. A course with appropriately modest objectives is easier to plan and to prepare for. We are really launching our students, and ourselves as well, although we may not wish to publish the latter fact too widely, on a new adventure in learning. Some students will make a lot of this opportunity; some will make less, and others, nothing at all. But that is certainly nothing new to professional educators.

So much for easing the mind with regard to the threats of newness and vastness. What of the final threat in the triad, the grim brother of the first two who may yet survive the passing of his kin? What can be done about the dryness that is seeminly inherent in the subject matter? Do not we ourselves stifle a yawn when the topic turns to the technicalities of the business world when we have no vested interests there?

What can we do to infuse the undeniably abstract and the seemingly remote with a sense of excitement and immediacy? These questions point us toward the main topic of this paper, the active involvement and participation of the students in the business foreign language course.

Up to this point I have dealt with the matter of setting objectives in the theoretical sense as a means of addressing the concerns we face when we must plan a new course for which we have had little or no formal preparation. At this point the objectives will be translated into terms more directly applicable to the conduct of the course itself. Keeping in mind that the objectives are themselves suggested by the three major concerns, newness, vastness, and, for want of a better word, dryness of the subject matter, we may now turn our attention to the practical matters of course design. The course materials we select and edit should provide through their degree of sophistication an appropriate or realistic entry level for the students into the field. What we will actually require of the students in terms of the materials to be mastered must, of course, be realizable and useful. But most importantly, the classroom experience itself must encourage the students to view the material as more than just an accumulation of facts and vocabulary to be learned. It is a good idea to start right off on the first day by impressing the students with the usefullness and broader implications of

the new vocabulary and concepts they will be learning. The model presented here involves the new vocabulary related to the idea of competition. As you will see, I have special reasons for beginning with this concept.

Competition is a very basic principle of the market place. This is even true for industries in planned or controlled economies as soon as they enter the world market. While explaining this to my students, using the target language, I write such terms on the board as competition, competitors, market place, free market economy, socially responsible economy, and planned economy. These terms, like everything else spoken, written or printed in this course, are in the target language only. Most of these terms will consitute new vocabulary for the students. Not only that, the concepts these terms denote will often be unfamiliar, or at least unclear. I tell my students that they must keep notebooks in which they record important new words and concepts. The terms listed above are to go on page one. While the students are busy complying with this first request from their teacher, I initiate an informal discussion with the objective of placing these new terms in a human, flesh-and-blood context. New vocabulary in this course should never be left just in the form of a list for memorization. Nothing will kill the course quicker than the heaping up of abstract terminology that the students never have the chance to "get their teeth into."

This is an appropriate time for a little philosophical discussion of competition. The students who have been silently questioning the value of this course for their liberal arts majors--foreign language majors, for example, who need the three hours to graduate--will perk up at this. You can point out, for example, that competition can be good or bad, depending on how it is used and what its effects are. Competition can be destructive when the powerful use it to drive the less powerful from the market place. It can be creative when it is the incentive for improvements in quality or efficiency. Almost everyone can identify with these ideas. Maybe not in terms of commerce, but what about in terms of competition for medical school admission, graduate fellowships, or course grades in general? Here we touch a nerve--competition for course grades. There may be some uneasy shifting in the seats, the shuffling of feet on the floor. But what about competition that is much less threatening because it cannot impact in a punitive way on those engaged in it? Something like informal sports competition or parlor games. Competition as recreation. Everyone can identify with that too. What makes it fun and re-creative? Everyone is involved and included. Everyone participates and makes a contribution. If the competiion involves a team effort, then the total team effort is the sum of the contributions of its members. The participant experiences the joy of being an appreciated part of the whole. Points

like these can be made in varying degrees of monolog and dialog, depending on the class, how comfortable the students feel with their teacher and their colleagues at this point in the course, and so on. But one way or another I will make these points with my students, not only because they give life to otherwise abstract terminology, but also because they serve as a nice introduction to an important feature of the methodology this course model uses to insure full, active student participation. This feature of the methodology is based on competition that is creative, not destructive, a competition that is nonthreatening in that it does not involve grade-related evaluations. Of course, one cannot just say that a method is nonthreatening and presume to speak for every student. Some students may well feel threatened by this method, in which case one should make the effort to find out where they feel threatened and to reassure them on those points. As far as actual course grades are concerned, they are derived from the usual quizzes, tests, and examinations, much as for any other course.

Let us now consider how this course and its class meetings will be structured. It should be noted that the course model described below is based on a meeting schedule of twice a week with one hour and fifteen minutes per meeting. The diagram shown here gives a visual overview of the course procedure. Each student should have a copy. The better

informed the students are about procedures, the better they can cooperate in making them work. At the end of each class meeting the students receive their assignments (1) for the next meeting. Ideally, the assignments would involve taped recordings which would be available in the language laboratory (2), but this would depend on the nature of the materials used in the course. The laboratory exercises, if available, would be followed by (3) the study of the assigned material at home. More will be said about the exact nature of the assignments later. Basically, two meetings with assignments are needed to deal with the core of material for a given topic or unit. These topics may themselves be part of a larger theme or focus that may require perhaps a month or more to treat. I feel, however, that in an introductory business foreign language course there should be several of these themes or focuses to give the course breadth and to guard against over-speicalization. The approaches to the assignments will vary, depending on whether it is the first or second meeting dealing with the material. The TUESDAY block (4) in the diagram refers to the first meeting treating the core material; THURSDAY refers to the second. In the first five minutes of the class period the projects are assigned for group work. On the second day in each case a short vocabulary quiz is given, so additional time must be set aside for that purpose. The next stage of the diagram (5) indicates that the students are broken up into

the appropriate number of groups. It is these groups that provide the basis for the competitions explained below. The groups spend thirty to thirty-five minutes working by themselves in the target language to prepare the day's project. The group leaders, who must be carefully-chosen, mature, responsible students, see to it that everyone has the chance to join in the project discussions and to make a contribution. During the next block of time (6) the assigned material is treated in various ways, some of them involving group competition and the awarding of points. The details for this procedure will follow. At the end of the class the assignment (7) in preparation for the next meeting is given.

At his point we must turn our attention to the nature of the materials the students are working with, the designs of the projects treated in the group sessions, and the methods for structuring and controlling the procedures for dealing with the project responses. I prefer that the material introducing new vocabulary and concepts be in dialog form since it is the form that most naturally lends itself to taped reproduction and contributes an atmosphere of the immediate and even the dramatic to the material. I tell my students to go to the laboratory and to imagine that they are actually listening in on a conversation of about five minutes in length between, say, a personnel director and a job applicant, or a marketing consultant and a production manager, or an engineer

and a field service representative, or whatever the case may be. Notice, I said "listening in." They are not to use the written form of the text at this point. After playing the tape a sufficient number of times so that they have the feeling that they know pretty well what the dialog was all about, the students are to take a little self-check quiz consisting of multiple-choice questions. They have the key to this quiz so that they can check their answers and get some immediate indication as to how well they understood the material. The students must be impressed with the importance of this stage of the learning process. They are developing a facility for following conversation in their new field of business, and the tape recordings present them with a nearly life-like experience, just as if they were in the foreign country. After taking this self-check quiz, the students should read through the text while listening to the tape. The final stage in preparation for the coming class meeting is to learn by heart a shortened form of the five-minute dialog consisting of no more than fourteen to fifteen sentences. These sentences should contain the key vocabulary words for this assignment. The TUESDAY model assignment consists then of four procedures. The students "listen in" on a realistic business conversation and, with the artificial advantage of replay, try to understand as much as they can. The self-check quiz gives them an idea of how well the have followed the dialog. The following-up

reading of the dialog text helps the student to see where the comprehension problems lie. The learning of the dialog short form gives the students a manageable number of new words in context as well as a synopsis of the dialog text. The objectives for this assignment are (1) to enhance the students' aural comprehension, (2) to introduce new vocabulary and concepts, and (3) to learn a selected number of these new words as active vocabulary. These objectives are realistic, realizable, and clear.

Now we come to the projects that the groups work with during the thriry minutes or so of the class period set aside for that purpose. During the first class meeting dealing with a given topic assignment (TUESDAY model), you may, for example, tell the groups that their project is to reproduce orally with no notes the condensed form of the dialog assigned as memorization work for that meeting. I usually allow twenty minutes practice time for this project. Each group has the chance to perform twice before their classmates. The first time, they may decide who will speak first and whether the speaking roles will then proceed clockwise or counter clockwise from that person. The second time, I decide. This means, in the latter case, that everyone has to know the whole dialog. The object is to make as few mistakes as possible. If a student "draws a blank" and cannot say anything when his or her turn comes up, I do not count that as a mistake as long

as someone else in the group can pick up the lines; however , no student may speak twice in a row. This procedure takes some of the pressure off the individual participants and contributes to the atmosphere of team effort, cooperation and mutual help among the group members. Even the strongest students will forget their lines from time to time, and the weakest will have their chance to shine. The group with the fewest mistakes receives the most competition points in this exercise. This is just one example of the game-like contests that will take place during the class meetings. The points are recorded in a visible way, such as on a wall chart, and prizes are awarded at midterm and at semester's end.

Another type of group project that can be used in the TUESDAY model is a fill-in-the-blank exercise. Give the students a ditto of ten sentences or so taken from the long dialog text from which you have deleted key words or even parts of words. This should involve some new vocabulary, but prepositions, conjunctions and other familiar words can present a surprising challenge. The students work together in their groups and decide how to fill in the blanks best. When you read the complete version to the class so that the groups can mark and total their mistakes, this can be one of the liveliest correcting and learning experiences imaginable. Students will groan, cheer, laugh, and generally enjoy themselves as they share communally in the "ecstasy of victory and the agony of

defeat.' Once again there is no grade pressure associated with the exercise, just bonus points for the ongoing competition.

Both of the exercises described above will generate some class discussion about terms and constructions easily overlooked when they are just so many words on the page of a textbook. The material begins to come alive when used in a way that demands understanding of its context. Although it does not appear that such exercises would be very time consuming, you you will find yourself wishing you had one and a half hours instead of an hour and fifteen minutes. And what is even better, the students will too.

The assignment for the second meeting (THURSDAY model) should include a thorough study of the longer written dialog. The students should learn the meaning of all new vocabulary in context and make notes on any concepts that are difficult for them. The short quiz that will be taken at the beginning of the period will include active vocabulary, i.e. English to target language, from the short dialog learned for the previous assignment as well as passive vocabulary, i.e. target language to English, from the long dialog text. This quiz should not take over five minutes of class time. Immediately following the quiz there should be an in-depth discussion of the longer dialog text. I always let the students ask the first questions. This, like all procedures in the course, should be done in the target language. Once the students have run out of questions,

I give a presentation of what I consider to be the important new concepts contained in the reading. For this I use the chalk board and an overhead projector. Simple transparencies with hand lettering--not typed--and some sketches or free-hand drawings are an infallible way of getting the students' attention. Let them see your drawing talents or lack of same. Share a little vulnerability with your students; the almost inevitable humor that results from your efforts always helps the class atmosphere. The drawing in the following illustration is used to explain a rather complicated subcontracting situation in which a manufacturing company in Frankfurt becomes involved with a subcontractor in Spain in the production of an item for a customer in Argentina. More than one shipping port is to be used, and the HERMES, an export credit insurance company, also has a role to play. A simple diagram like this one helps the students to visualize the whole procedure.

The next illustration represents the kind of drawing that can be used to stimulate discussion based on the text. Here the sequence deals with an on-the-job accident resulting in injury to an employee. The incident must be investigated by the DBG, that decides that the company, EE, is at fault because the worker had been asked to put in too much overtime. The company will have to assume responsibility for the disability, etc. The drawings can, of course, be much more primitive than these. Stick figures will do just as well to

get the point across or provide a visual context for discussion.

Once you have dealt with the students' questions and made whatever presentations you had planned for the second meeting (THURSDAY model), the class should break up into its groups. They may have the project on this day to make a transparency themselves. For example, they may be asked to design a flow chart showing how different departments within a business deal with a particular matter if that happens to have been explicitly treated in the material at hand. Or they may be asked to show how a large company is set up administratively by drawing a diagram of the company hierarchy. Each group receives a blank transparency and a marking pen. The groups will then discuss the project and make many sketches on scratch paper before the design is committed to film. The results are then projected on the screen so the class as a whole can see the handiwork of the various groups and discuss the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the designs.

Although the project described above does not lend itself to the competition concept, you can still use the last fifteen minutes of the meeting for a "quickie" competition exercise by distributing Xerox copies of a short newspaper article, probably from the business section, dealing with a topic appropriate to the students' background at that point. The groups then answer as well as they can the true-false and/or multiple-choice questions you have made up and passed out with

the article. You can check these answers in the last minute before the bell.

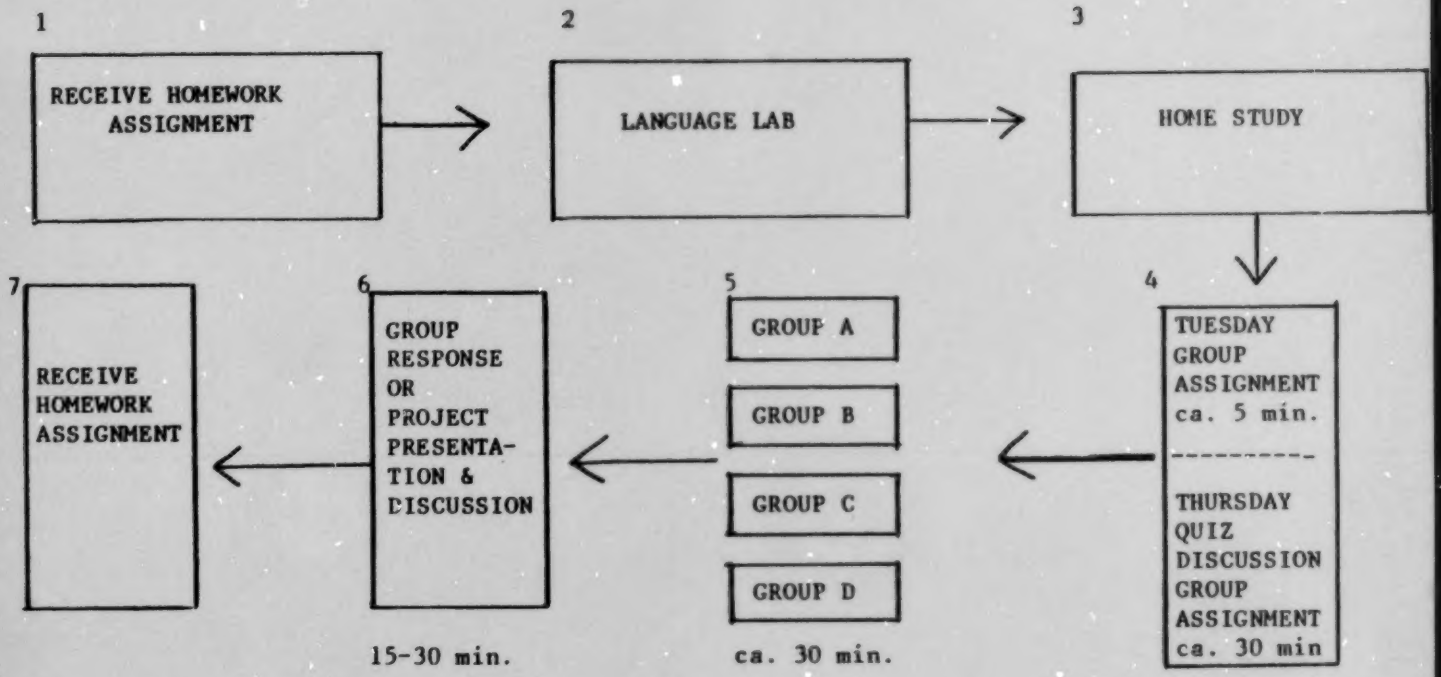
The number of possible variations on the group project models described above is virtually limitless. Video tapes, movie films, and audio tapes offer some very attractive possibilities. You may have the students view and/or listen to recorded materials that have something to do with trade, industry, small businesses, shopping, etc. The segments treated should not be more than five minutes in length. The groups then answer a set of questions ranging in level of difficulty from those that can be answered by the casual observer to those that require careful observation and thoughtful response. The groups discuss and agree upon their responses, which they commit to writing. The groups will mark their mistakes in the discussion that follows in the plenary session. This can lead to some very interesting exchanges between groups and instructor.

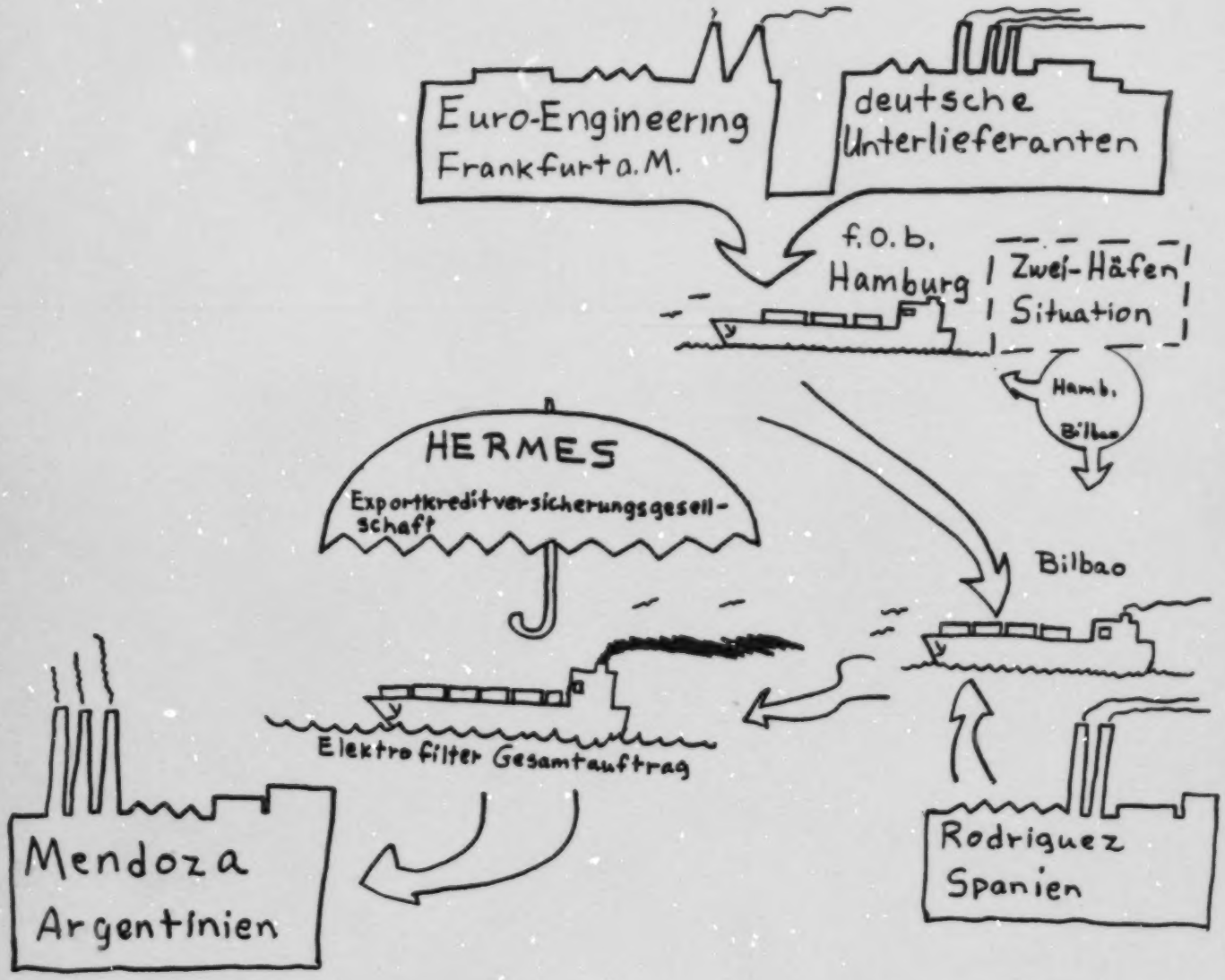
Role-play provides a good opportunity for the students to show how well they can use their new vocabulary and how well they understand the context appropriate to it. Some ideas they can role-play are as follows: applying for a job with a particular firm, planning or conducting contractural negotiations with a client and subcontractors, planning for a business trip or a job assignment in a foreign country. It works best when you provide the groups with some guidelines, such as sample

questions that might be asked by a personnel director in a job interview. If the group is role-playing contractural negotiations, you might list the expectations of the client and the sort of problems that have to be solved by contractors, such as delivery schedules, subcontracting, tarrifs, insurance, exchange rates, and the like. In the case of the business trip or the job assignment in a foreign country you could have the groups deal with such things as bonus pay, benefits, foreign exchange, living conditions, and travel expenses.

One additional project possibility that should be mentioned here is the idea of the "test dry run." During the meeting before each hour test I give the students a sample test that differs from the real thing only in actual content. The form and length are identical to the test they will take in the following meeting. The students work in their groups, discuss their answers, and come up with a version they can agree upon. They have an hour to do this; the last fifteen minutes are devoted to the in-class correction of the groups' papers. This is another example of the kind of group activity that can be scored and used in the competitions. But more important than that, the students have just taught each other a great deal in their discussions of the test questions. Moreover, they have found out what they did not know, and they will leave the classroom knowing exactly what kind of questions will be asked on the real test.

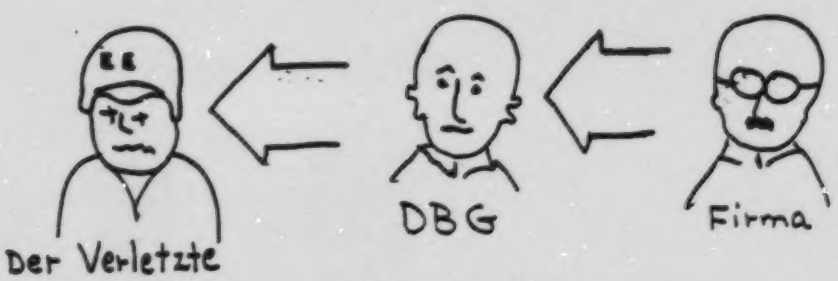
In summary, I would like to make the following points. Anyone who is willing to put in the requisite planning time can teach a successful business foreign language course without undergoing special training. The objectives for such a course must be realistic, i.e. everyone, students and instructor included, must understand that this is an introductory course to an important, extremely complex, and highly sophisticated aspect of a foreign culture. The objectives for the course must be realizable, i.e. the amount of material for which the students are to be held responsible and the level of sophistication they are expected to attain will be, given the depth and breadth of the field as a whole, appropriately modest, though nonetheless worthwhile. Finally, the class meetings themselves should be structured in such a manner as to involve the students in immediate active use of their new vocabulary and concepts. Small student groups, controlled by means of specially designed group projects, afford an excellent means for realizing this goal.


1
RECEIVE HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT
2
LANGUAGE LAB
3
HOME STUDY
4
TUESDAY GROUP ASSIGNMENT ca. 5 min.
THURSDAY QUIZ DISCUSSION GROUP ASSIGNMENT ca. 30 min
5
GROUP A
GROUP B
GROUP C
GROUP D
ca. 30 min.
6
GROUP RESPONSE OR PROJECT PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION
15-30 min.
7
RECEIVE HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT


Euro-Engineering
Frankfurt a.M.
deutsche
Unterlieferanten
f.o.b.
Hamburg
Zwei-Häfen
Situation
Hamb.
Bilbao
HERMES
Exportkreditversicherungsgesell-
schaft
Bilbao
Elektro filter Gesamtauftrag
Mendoza
Argentinien
Rodriguez
Spanien

Wer wird wohl regreßpflichtig gemacht?

Und was bedeutet das eigentlich?



BUSINESS LANGUAGE COMPONENTS FOR VARIOUS LEVELS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY

Dr. Carole A. Head

Department of Modern Foreign Languages
High Point College
High Point, N.C. 27262

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As some academic institutions do not yet offer a separate course in foreign language for business, teachers in these institutions are seeking ways to introduce business materials into the existing, more traditional foreign language course offerings. Even when the curriculum does include a course in foreign language for business and the professions, the student needs to be exposed to the idea of such a course in the early stages of language study, thereby demonstrating to the student the practical applications of foreign language study and thus stimulating his interest in the specialized business language course. To do this effectively foreign language teachers need to include business-related materials in their courses at all levels of study, from beginning to advanced. In view of this need, this paper will suggest several business language components which can be easily incorporated into existing foreign language courses. These components emphasize a variety of skills and include examples of activities, techniques, and materials which can be employed at various levels of foreign language study.

On the elementary level of language study "password" and "What's my line?" are two oral communication activities which can be used as early as the second semester and which lend themselves easily to a business orientation. Examples of vocabulary appropriate for "password" at this level include simple financial terms, office machines, office supplies, secretarial duties, and the like. The first few times students play "What's my line?" at this level they may need some written materials to guide them. The instructor can prepare a list of various jobs, related vocabulary, and sample questions concerning where the person works, whether or not he works alone or with others, whether he travels in his job, whether he uses machines, etc.

At this level a business orientation can easily be given to many writing activities. After the students have studied the past tense and have learned the vocabulary for various academic disciplines, courses of study, diplomas, etc. they can be given the necessary terms and the format for a curriculum vitae and asked to write their own curriculum vitae. After having studied numbers, dates and the currency of the country

involved, students can be given simple business forms to complete, for example, checks, money orders, forms for opening checking accounts, hotel registration forms, mailing labels, etc. Sending a telex is another writing activity which can work quite well during the second semester of language study. In order to generate more interest the instructor may divide the class into small groups and have the students do the activity as a competition. Each group is given a piece of paper containing the same business situation; for example, company X receives an order from company Y and wants to inform the latter of the shipping details and confirm the price. Students are instructed not to begin until each group has the written description. The groups then read the situation described and write the telex in question. The group which completes the telex first writes the text of the telex on the board; this is then read and corrected by the entire class.

At this level relatively simple want ads constitute a good learning tool for a reading comprehension activity. After all students understand the content and vocabulary of the ad, they practice question formation by asking one another

questions about the content of the ad: What is the job in question? Does the candidate need to know several languages? What is the salary? What degrees must the candidate have?

In courses on the intermediate level the various business language components involve somewhat more elaborate reading and writing activities. Import-export business forms, such as a bill of lading, shipping documentation, customs declarations, and the like make very interesting tools for teaching business vocabulary and generating conversation. In activities involving such forms the instructor can give the students certain information in written form, such as a conversation between a shipping clerk and a secretary, who are discussing the content, packaging, weight, destination, carrier, freight forwarder, etc. for an order to be shipped abroad. After reading the conversation, students are asked to work in groups to complete a bill of lading based on the information contained in the conversation.

At this level the use of want ads can be expanded to include a writing component. After reading several examples of want ads in the target language, students work in teams to

prepare similar ads for such positions as secretary, sales representative, interpreter, accountant, etc. Similarly, product advertisements taken from publications in the target language can constitute both a reading and writing activity. While reading these advertisements students are not only learning vocabulary, reviewing colors, adjectives, command forms, and the like, but they are also being subtly introduced to certain cultural aspects of the people who produced the advertisements. After reading several sample advertisements in the target language, students may write a similar advertisement for a product of their choice.

As an oral communication activity intermediate-level students can be asked to write and then act out a certain dialogue, for example, one in which they ask their employer for a salary increase. This works very nicely when reviewing the use of the past tense for completed actions, as contrasted with the use of the present tense for certain actions which began in the past and which are continuing at the present time. Students will have to state how long they have been working for the company in question and what they have done to merit

a pay raise. Business-oriented brochures gathered during a trip abroad (from post offices, rental agencies, banks, train stations, travel agencies) make interesting reading material for students at the intermediate level. Such realia is much more appealing to the students than the fabricated articles taken from a book written only for language courses.

A course in conversation lends itself quite easily to activities having a business orientation. Due to their practical nature, conversations simulating a job interview are always very successful in such a course. The instructor may give the students a list of want ads from which they must choose a position and work in pairs to create the job interview for the position chosen. Before presenting themselves for the interview, the students must simulate telephone conversations in which they ask for additional information about the position and request an appointment for the interview.

Further use of product advertisements in the target language can be made in the conversation course by having the students give an oral critique of an advertisement of their choice. Points to include in the critique might be: What

constitutes the appeal of the advertisement? What social group is targeted by the advertisement? What is the probable educational level of the target group? What makes the advertisement visually appealing? How does it differ from an American advertisement for the same product?

By including various types of commercial correspondence the instructor can give a business orientation to the course in Advanced Grammar and Composition. After having the class study certain formulae (salutations, introductory statements, complimentary closings), the instructor gives examples of subjects for business letters--such as a request for space in a trade show, a complaint concerning an incorrect shipment, a cancellation of an order, or a reminder of payment due--and has students work in groups to prepare the appropriate business letter. Using an overhead projector to correct the letters allows all students to benefit from the work of each group. As a more personalized type of business correspondence, students can be asked to write a cover letter to accompany a job application.

The instructor can add a business perspective to a course in contemporary civilization by discussing certain social practices in the business world--forms of address, appropriate times for business phone calls, etc.--and by giving the students recent socio-economic and political information about the country in question. In conjunction with the study of geography in a civilization course the instructor can ask students to organize a tour for a business executive who must make a trip abroad and who wants to remain an extra week in the country in order to visit several particularly interesting areas. The student must plan the tour, keeping in mind the particular business interests of the person involved (textiles, automotive, interior design, fashion, computer software, etc.) while guiding him to those areas which will be particularly interesting for him, not only from an historical and cultural perspective, but from a business perspective as well.

While the foregoing examples of business components for the foreign language classroom are in no way intended to be exhaustive or to be appropriate to every course or student group, these activities can provide the foreign language

instructor with several ideas for effectively introducing students to the notion of foreign language for business and the professions. In those institutions which do not yet have a specific course in foreign language for business these components can provide the instructor with a means of devoting some class time to business-related activities. Even if the institution does offer a separate course in business language, the inclusion of such components in other foreign language courses will stimulate student interest in the specialized business language course, increase the student's chances for success when he later enrolls in such a course, and will give a certain unity to the foreign language curriculum of the institution.

MOVING FROM VOCABULARY ACQUISITION TO FUNCTIONAL PROFICIENCY: TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES

Hazel Cramer

Department of International Communications & Culture
State University College at Cortland
Cortland, NY 13045

Susan Terrio

Department of Modern Languages
Elizabethtown College
Elizabethtown, PA 17022

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Moving from Vocabulary Acquisition to Functional Proficiency: Techniques and Strategies

The student who takes a course in commercial language will certainly acquire a set of new vocabulary words, many technical in nature. Teachers preparing such a course for the first time must, in many cases, reorient themselves and master a content that involves knowledge of economics, political science, and trade. From the point of view of the teacher venturing into the area of commercial studies, the primary challenge, or, in some cases, obstacle, is the need to learn the many specific terms needed to express concepts in the second language. Some of those terms, for example "bill of lading," may not be completely familiar in English. As a consequence, the teacher views his or her preparation in terms of learning words.

The teacher of the commercial language course, because of the attention demanded by vocabulary, may find that the resulting course that he or she structures is oriented to acquisition of isolated words and to the learning of lists of vocabulary items organized in terms of fine distinctions among them. In fact, the goal of the commercial course should

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be to lead the students to achieve a far broader goal: the acquisition of functional proficiency.

The term "functional proficiency" is a broad one; it covers awareness of culture-based language functions as well as sensitivity to style. A course that has the development of functional proficiency as its goal focuses on three areas:

1. Context

The course considers the country where the target language is spoken and fosters a critical understanding of business within the society of that country as a whole.

2. Practice

Class activities permit the student to use newly-acquired terms and concepts in communication situations.

3. Verification

Testing measures the student's progress in identifying the features that distinguish business in the country whose language is being studied from American business and requires use of the technical vocabulary in situations that vary functionally, that is, in situations that require the student to inquire, persuade, deny, etc.

Verification includes the administration of an oral proficiency interview test, given at the conclusion of the

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course. This test measures students' progress against the standard of real-life linguistic behaviors of native speakers, including the ability to use certain functions in particular contexts with suitable accuracy. The scale used to measure progress is that developed by ACTFL/ETS. Students enrolled in the course may also have the option of taking a test administered by an internationally recognized agency. For example, students of French do the examination administered by the Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Paris for the certificat for proficiency in commercial French. Earning a high rating on the ACTFL/ETS scale and such a certificate increases the credibility of students as they search for jobs, internships, or financial support for graduate programs.

The specific example of a course in French will show how each area identified above figures into the structuring and development of an effective commercial course.

CONTEXT

In the commercial French course, emphasis is placed on the historical and cultural forces which have shaped French industry in the past. Essential to this task is the development of a perspective on the distinctive features of traditional French businesses which emerged during the Industrial Revolution and which scarcely changed until after World War II. Students

need to understand that the structures and management practices of French industry developed during pre-war years reflected the cultural values of those times. Similarly, a discussion of the post-war era, which heralded the transformation within the space of forty years from an agrarian-based society in 1944 to a major industrial power, is crucial to an understanding of the characteristics of French businesses today. These dramatic changes reflect as well the shift in cultural values which occurred during France's industrialization. The massive exodus from rural to urban centers, the subsequent disappearance of the peasant and his unique ethic along with a huge swell in the tertiary sector, the increase in the numbers of working women, and fundamental changes in the educational system have transformed the nature and fabric of French society.

Once this historical-cultural backdrop is in place, the course can move to the treatment of the relationship between business and the important social partners— the State, unions, inter-governmental agencies such as the Common Market, and Chambers of Commerce and Industry, etc.— which comprise the working environment. The teacher plans for discussion of a limited number of social partners, according to his or her priorities and time constraints. In France, the most significant social partner for industry has been and still is the State. A brief overview of the interventionist role the State has

traditionally played in areas like the regulation of investment procedures and labor-management practices can serve as a transition to the discussion of the effects of Socialism on the business community. An analysis of Socialist philosophy (i.e. traditional distrust of unbridled capitalism and faith in a strong, central State to establish guidelines for industry while protecting the working person and the economy) and of legislation enacted under Mitterrand (i.e. third wave of nationalizations, increase in paid vacation and minimum wage, hiring of additional civil servants, Lois Auroux, etc.) points to the dramatic impact of government on French business. Students, appreciating the role of the State in France, will be interested in having current figures from the important economic indicators: growth of the GNP, the rate of inflation pre- and post- Mitterrand, unemployment statistics, the balance of trade, and the status of the franc against the dollar and other major currencies.

Finally, as a bridge to span the theoretical material and the functional use of language in culturally authentic notions, the class should begin the study of the major legal forms of business organization in France at the present time. Students should also learn the staff-and-line functions which most commonly represent the internal structure of French firms. Having a specific example of a French company to use as a model

and a basis for comparison is extremely useful. (See below, Part II.)

This approach ensures that the language, albeit technical and specialized, will not be separated from the culture. Indeed, adequate treatment of language and culture is the foundation of functional proficiency. Once the class has a perspective on the profound cultural changes of the post-war period, students can more fully appreciate the impact these changes have on culture-based language functions and the communication style required in the business world.

PRACTICE

The second focus of the course, therefore, is the acquisition of functional proficiency in oral and written expression. Integrated into the presentation of the background material is practice on tasks or functions which students will need in order to perform effectively in a variety of culturally authentic settings. Locales like financial institutions, service agencies such as insurance and advertising firms, the post office, and personnel office, are the point of departure for creating situations in which students get interactive oral and written practice. Besides mastering the vocabulary associated with the settings, the student learns which aspects of these institutions' functioning are intrinsically French and learns

or reviews the expressions used in greeting, inviting, soliciting information, stating opinions, stating preferences or dislikes, agreeing, disagreeing, suggesting, and persuading. Students must build a sensitivity to the choice of the formal versus the informal level of language. For example, the choice of expressions differs when one expresses disagreement to the company's chief officer rather than to a trusted colleague of equal status.

Knowledge of appropriate levels of language is not restricted to spoken discourse. Learning the variations in written style required in business correspondence is imperative as well. One does not write to a faithful client of many years as one does to a firm with a questionable credit history. Practice in drafting letters of different tones insures that the students will become aware of nuances and will be able to understand and write texts that imply the nature of the business-client relationship.

VERIFICATION

Providing students with an adequate cultural background, pertinent vocabulary, and practical interactive models throughout the semester is an effective means for developing functional proficiency. However, the increasing emphasis placed on accountability by educators and employers in the area of oral proficiency demands that there be a credible means of evaluating

students' progress. The oral proficiency interview test and the corresponding ACTFL/ETS rating scale provide a viable diagnostic tool for evaluating students' functional proficiency in the spoken language. The structure and focus of the test speak to the concern for making the acquisition of functional proficiency a primary goal in the writing of curricula for professional language courses. A brief description of the test illustrates its relevance for the commercial course:

As outlined in the ETS testing manual, the oral proficiency interview is a testing procedure that measures a wide range of speaking ability. In the interview, a trained tester holds a conversation with the candidate for from ten to forty minutes. The speech sample elicited in the interview is assigned a global rating from 0 (no ability in the language) to Superior (ability to function in a variety of professional settings). Most importantly, the candidate's language performance is evaluated in terms of real-life linguistic behavior. The interactive format of the test is in itself an example of a communication situation.

One feature that distinguishes the oral proficiency interview test from other kinds of oral tests is the fact that it is curriculum-free. Unlike an oral achievement test, whose purpose is to measure the students' acquisition of a fixed body of material (for example, one component of a given course), the interview test focuses on language competence without regard

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for length or method of the student's preparation. The interview test probes to find areas in which the student is not competent, unlike the achievement test which never asks the student to handle material not covered in the curriculum.

The tester's role, therefore, is to find the limits beyond which a candidate is unable to go. It is the tester's responsibility to elicit a sample of the best sustained level of language that the candidate is capable of producing. The tester then assigns the candidate a rating, based on the sample that the tester has elicited by interviewing the candidate. A vital part of the process of assigning ratings is the evaluation of overall speaking performance. Three factors comprise this performance: functions, context, and accuracy. Is the candidate capable of performing certain functions in a particular context with appropriate accuracy? At Advanced/Level 2, for example, the student could be asked to perform the function of description of a past event. The context would be his or her feelings on the first day of a new job. The accuracy would involve consistent use of the imperfect tense of some high and low frequency verbs and sufficient vocabulary and grammatical control to make the account intelligible to a person not used to dealing with foreigners.

Functions, such as "describing," cited above, are universal linguistic tasks, performed in all settings and common to all trades and professions. The oral interview test provides for

the evaluation of the functions at each level of the rating scale. Although functions are always attached to a context or topic and must be performed with acceptable levels of accuracy, these task universals merit particular attention. The ETS manual states that frequently a low rating in an interview results not from inaccurate grammar or faulty pronunciation, but from failure to accomplish functions, a failure which keeps communication from taking place.

The functional ability at Advanced/Level 2 includes asking and answering questions, narrating, describing, and getting in, through, and out of a survival situation with a complication. Because many business language students aspire to participate in internships with international firms, at home or abroad, achievement of this level of linguistic performance is a reasonable goal for the commercial course and should constitute the organizing principle for determining the curriculum in the course. Using the oral interview as a measure has the additional advantage of providing the student with a nationally-recognized rating. The interview is used for persons of diverse backgrounds. The uniformity of its application and rating procedures insures that a future employer or graduate admissions officer will know the candidate's strengths and limitations. The decision to admit or employ the person will be an informed one. Furthermore, the identification of oral proficiency as a goal and the

specification that the level of proficiency will be determined by oral testing has a final advantage as well: using proficiency-based scales makes the importance of the mastery of oral skills clear to the student.

TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES

The teacher who has identified the development of functional proficiency as a course goal and who accepts the definition of functional proficiency that is outlined above must combine material from a number of sources to develop an effective course.

I. Context: the cultural component

Few texts in Commercial French provide the background information necessary for understanding the context in which business operates. The outline below, labeled "Lecture Format," can serve as a model for the presentation of this material. Two possible procedures are:

(1) presentation of the material as a rapid overview during the initial two or three weeks of the semester or

(2) inclusion within each week's work during the semester of a cultural/historical component.

The topics are presented using appropriate instructional media; typed outlines, provided before lectures, facilitate students' understanding.

A. Lecture Format

1. Brief Historical Overview

   a. The development of the French nation prior to World War II

   b. The organization of the State

2. Post-War Years: Dramatic Industrial Transformation

   a. Major features of post-war French society

   b. Cultural conditions reflected in types and structures of French businesses

   c. Post-war renewal and political change (V^{e} République, evolution of former colonies, etc.)

   d. Current success stories in traditional and non-traditional businesses (Renault, Ariane, etc.)

   e. The role of France and French in the world

3. The Cultural Environment: Significant Social Partners

   a. The State

      i. Etat-puissance

      ii. Etat-patron

   b. Intergovernmental organizations

      i. Chambres de Commerce et d'Industrie

      ii. Common Market

   c. Unions

      i. CGT

      ii. CFDT

      iii. FO, and others

   d. Political parties

4. La Force Tranquille: Impact of Socialism on French Business Enterprise

   a. Third Mauroy Cabinet, May 1983

b. Traditional Socialist Model (ex. Léon Blum, Jean Jaurès)

c. Legislation / Policies enacted under Mitterrand

d. Economic indicators / Future projections

5. Legal Forms of French Businesses

a. S.A., S.A.R.L., etc.

b. Case Study

Teachers can help students by providing case studies of French businesses. Seminars such as those offered by the Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Paris include stages during which the teacher can acquire first-hand experience of la vie en entreprise in a French company. The authors' case study of Nina Ricci, done in the summer of 1983, provides a model, distributed and explained to their classes.

In addition to lecturing, the teacher can present background information by using other techniques:

B. Abstract format

The teacher selects an article on one "context" subject or another relevant topic. The article is in the target language. The student is given the following assignment: You have been asked by Mr. Jones, an American executive, to summarize for him the contents of this article. He does not understand French. The teacher provides a series of questions to help the student understand the article. (EXAMPLE: The article discusses

a particular company and its successes. The specific questions point to key passages: What kind of company is it? How has the strong dollar affected the company's performance? etc.) Students who do readings of this sort will acquire vocabulary more naturally than those who memorize word lists; the fifth time that a student reads chiffre d'affaires, the term will have a direct and immediate meaning. The assignment also suggests an important role that the student proficient in a second language will play, that of conduit of information to those people who do not have second language skills.

C. Common reading

In this format for presenting background material, the class is given a text in French to read on a topic from among those discussed above, for example, the Common Market. Each person is given one question to answer by reading the article carefully. The question may ask for factual information, or the question may require interpretation. (EXS: Quels pays en font partie? D'après ce que vous avez compris, quels sont les problèmes auxquels on fait face à ce moment?) During the class hour, without any reference to books or notes, each student contributes the piece of information that he or she has to offer. Before the exercise, each student is given a written questionnaire

to fill in as other class members speak. The questionnaire, once evaluated and returned, becomes a summary sheet.

II. Interactive Models: Practice that incorporates the cultural component and functional proficiency

The assignments described below provide functionally-oriented, authentic practice.

Long-term projects

A. La Création d'une entreprise

1. Objectives and general description

Students become familiar with aspects of the organization of a company by creating their own enterprise. For this model, the class is divided into teams of three to five students, and each team creates its own French business. Students present their work before the class orally and in the form of a written report.

-The first steps in creating a company include choosing a product or service, a company name, and a geographical location suitable for the production site and/or the company headquarters. Students must consider the legal structure which would be most appropriate, based on the number of active or silent partners, the capital possessed by the partners, etc.

-Once a legal form has been selected, attention is then turned to the internal structure. Each team must lay out the staff-and-line functions for their company. The team must also describe the chain of command and company procedures relating

to the flow of information and the decision-making process in their company's management network.

-Equally important is the size of the work force and a definition of management's philosophy with regard to labor. (Will there be unions? What kind of relationship exists between management and labor? etc.)

-Students are also asked to justify their choice of product and the site of company headquarters. (What market conditions did they "research," and what economic indicators inspired confidence at this time?)

-Their presentation should end with a brief plan outlining their firm's objectives over the next five to ten years. How does the company hope to meet the challenges of doing business in France in the 1980's?

2. Procedures

-Working independently, each group meets outside of class at least three weeks before the project is due.

-During the first week, students structure their research, and tasks are assigned to each group member.

-In the second week, the students reassemble to choose their project, location, name, etc. They assign themselves roles (P.D.-G., chef du personnel, etc.), and choose topics which they must discuss during the presentation.

-After the second group meeting, one or two representatives from each group arrange a meeting with the teacher, who

provides feedback on the quality of their research and the initial design of their company.

-In the final group meeting prior to the oral presentation, students edit and refine their work and rehearse their individual parts.

-Working through their given roles, the group members present their company to the class.

-Class members from other groups and the teacher may play the role of representatives of the Ministry of Finance or the D.A.T.A.R. They may challenge the group's arguments or ask provocative questions.

-The written report is due two weeks after the oral presentation.

3. Teaching tools provided

-Functional expressions for stating opinions, insisting, refuting, and conceding

-Pertinent vocabulary: names of section heads, etc.

B. Le Lancement d'un nouveau produit

1. Objectives

The student becomes familiar with the questions that must be discussed when considering producing and publicizing a new product. These topics include reasons for developing a new product, preliminary analysis of an idea, a simulated market study (favorable to the development of the new product!), development of marketing strategies, discussion of pricing and packaging

options, and long-range projections.

2. Procedures

The class divides and does group presentations, using procedures similar to those outlined above for the creation of a company. The project will be presented orally and in writing. The in-class presentation includes playing a skit in which the people involved in the project discuss their ideas. Included should be scenarios in which several marketers, long-time colleagues, brainstorm using the tu form and functional expressions suitable for informal levels of language. In a subsequent vignette, these same colleagues make a formal presentation of their market research and their suggested product to the Board of Directors. They now use expressions required for persuading, conceding, etc., and tailor their communication style to this very formal context.

3. Teaching tools provided

-Samples of French publicity from magazines

-Videotape of commercials available from French Cultural Services

The two long-term projects outlined above are intended to represent major efforts on the students' parts. What they have in common is the requirement that the student be active, that he or she use the language to communicate, and that the student assume a particular role. The same demands can be made in assignments of a more restricted nature. Again, the

objective is to put students into situations in which the language acquired will be used immediately, and be used authentically.

Weekly Projects

A. Skeletons

Using a dialogue from a textbook as a point of departure, the teacher first asks the class to practice a conversation. Once the vocabulary has been discussed and the class has practiced the dialogues in a group setting, the teacher provides skeleton models of the conversations.

EXAMPLE:

The text contains lines of dialogue like the following:

--Vous pouvez quitter Paris demain matin. Il y a un train à dix heures quarante. Vous arriverez à Marseille à dix-huit heures trente.

--Mais je ne veux pas arriver à dix-huit heures trente!

--Bon, alors, prenez l'avion à neuf heures.

The students practice, then use the skeleton to create a variant:

--Vous pouvez quitter _____ _____. Il y a un train à _____. Vous arriverez à _____ à _____.

--Mais je ne veux pas arriver à _____!

--Bon, alors, prenez _____ à _____.

Students put appropriate information into blanks and use the variant created in that fashion to practice. Students work

in pairs. Student A does not know what information Student B will supply. As a result, the dialogue line in which Student B repeats what Student A has said requires careful listening. When the exchange in question is a telephone conversation, students do the exercise back to back, with toy phones, to recreate a situation in which the other party is not visible.

B. Creations of conversations and letters (written to be handed in), based on text's models

These assignments are prepared outside of class and handed in. The students write letters and conversations of their own, closely following the text's examples. The goal is to increase familiarity with patterns. Good models will provide nuances of doubt, impatience, etc.

C. In-class writing assignments

After practicing by writing letters and conversations based on models, the students do similar exercises in class without reference to texts or notes.

EXAMPLE:

You have been asked to make hotel arrangements for Monsieur Dupont during his trip to Lyon. Write the telephone conversation in which you reserve him a room. Make sure that all relevant considerations have been taken into account.

Weekly assignments that are structured in this fashion insure that the student will have continual practice

using the vocabulary that he or she is learning.

In sum, the most pertinent and successful commercial course is one that meets the general requirement for any valuable language course: students learn to use the language in an authentic and interesting fashion. The emphasis is not on any of the intermediate skills, the acquisition of vocabulary, the drilling of verb forms, or the repetition of lines of dialogue, but on the exchange of information and indication of feelings and emotions that characterize use of language in the real world. Thus, for the teacher organizing a commercial course, the most demanding tasks are ultimately not those that appear to present the greatest challenges when the project is first envisioned. The teacher must, of course, master vocabulary and acquire new areas of expertise. But a different test of the teacher's skills comes when he or she must organize the course so that the students do indeed acquire functional proficiency. In order to meet that goal, the teacher must make choices. The teacher who provides students with opportunities to do exercises of the sorts described above will probably require the mastery of fewer facts than the teacher whose sole aim is to purvey the greatest amount of information in the shortest possible time. The teacher will have to narrow the focus of the course. Instead of attempting to survey business in all Francophone areas of the world, for example, the point of departure may be restricted to practices

in France. Rather than attempting to teach students at all levels at once, the teacher may have to define prerequisites so that the class is fairly homogeneous, preferably having a good grasp of the basic structures of the language.

Within the constraints of a semester or even a year, students cannot learn everything about "commercial language," given the extension of that term to include cultural studies, economics, and political science as well as narrower areas such a formulae appropriate for the writing of business letters. Therefore, the teacher must impose limits and define precisely the goals of the course. The student who acquires functional proficiency during the course is the student whose teacher has made the best choice in identifying the objectives appropriate for a course in commercial foreign language.

TEXTS, ANCILLARY MATERIALS, AND REFERENCES

The following texts have been purchased by students in the courses described above:

Cresson, Bernard. Introduction au français économique. Didier: Paris, 1971. OR

Cresson, Bernard. Introduction au français commercial. Didier: Paris, 1972.

Dany, Max, Geliot, Jacques, et al. Le Français du secrétariat commercial. Le Français et la profession, Hachette: Paris, 1977.

Works used for library reserve reading assignments include:

Bénouis, Mustapha K. Le Français économique et commercial. Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich: New York, 1982.

Bruézière, Maurice et Jacqueline Charon. Le Français commercial. 2 vols. Larousse: Paris, 1967. The 2nd volume, Textes d'études, provides interesting and varied readings for advanced students.

Cummins, Patricia W. Commercial French. Prentice Hall: Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1982.

Guback, Denise. Français commercial. Holt, Rinehart and Winston: New York, 1984.

Oudot, Simone and David L. Gobert. La France: Culture, Economie, Commerce. Houghton Mifflin Company: Boston, 1984.

Other materials of interest include:

The Français Fonctionnel series, Section gestion, published by CLE International, 88 Boulevard Arago, 75014 Paris. Volumes include: La Décision d'investir; Rentabiliser une production; Lancer un nouveau produit; Vendre, Exporter; L'Organisation de l'entreprise.

Frommer, Judith. Femmes et métiers. Harvard University: Cambridge, Mass. This taped series includes interview with the assistant mayor of a Communist town, a fonctionnaire, and a directrice.

Nusbaum, Marlene and Liliane Verdier. Parlez sans peur. Holt, Rinehart and Winston: 1983. This text teaches skills like debating.

Information about videotaped commercials may be obtained from the French Cultural Services, 972 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10021, (212) 570-4400. Available tapes also include Videocassette 1307, French Techno-Wonders (Renault's flexible robotics; Val, underground train in Lille, etc.), English dialogue, rental $15.00/ sale $75.00, 3/4 inch video.

Information about the certificat for proficiency in commercial French is available from Monsieur Jacques Cartier, La Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de Paris, 14, rue Chateaubriand, 75008 Paris (tél. 561.99.00)

Oral Proficiency Testing and ACTFL/ETS Workshop Service:
ACTFL/ETS will present workshops to familiarize teachers with oral proficiency testing and rating, using the modified Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale. The Project Director is Vicky Galloway, ACTFL, P.O. Box 408, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York 10706 (914)478-2011. Dr. Barbara Freed is the Director of the Regional Center for Language Proficiency located at the University of Pennsylvania.

Other sources of information:

L'Express, 31 cours des Juilliottes, 94705 Maisons-Alfort Cedex, France

Le Monde Sélection hébdomadaire, 5, rue des Italiens, 75427 Paris Cedex 09

Le Nouvel Observateur, 215 Boulevard MacDonald, 75944 Paris Cedex 19

THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE BUSINESS COURSE: VARYING THE ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Emily Spinelli

Department of Humanities
University of Michigan, Dearborn
Dearborn, Michigan 48128

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The Foreign Language Business Course: Varying the Activities and Assignments

During the past decade the foreign language business course has become a standard offering in many colleges and universities. Although the quality and quantity of textbooks available for such a course have greatly improved, instructors must still spend many hours agonizing over course content and preparing appropriate activities and assignments. The entire course comes more clearly into focus and the preparation of materials is simplified if the course is perceived primarily as a language class rather than a business class. When the class is viewed as an advanced conversation and composition course whose topic is business, three areas for student proficiency in the target language can be observed: the teaching of vocabulary--business terminology, the teaching of composition--business correspondence, and the teaching of culture--business practices. Then activities and assignments appropriate to these skill areas can be devised and utilized.

1. Teaching Business Terminology

Research in psychology[1] and in foreign language methodology[2] has demonstrated that it is much easier to remember words that occur in a catagorized list, e.g. typewriter, calculator, desk, computer, file cabinet, than words in a semantically unordered list, e.g. typewriter, industry, mortgage, publicity, transportation, laundry. Most foreign language business textbooks are divided into chapters that are organized around a topical theme such as banking, real estate or advertising. These chapter themes provide a ready-made list of categorized vocabulary. We

need only to develop and use exercises which emphasize this principle of categorical clustering in order to facilitate student acquisition of the vocabulary.

The following two exercises are designed to help students mentally categorize various forms of business terminology. The exercises could be used as an outside assignment, in-class activity or as a test item.

FIGURE 1

Find the word that does not belong in the series.

1.	(A)	calculator	(B)	blender	(C)	typewriter	(D) computor
2.	(A)	peso	(B)	peseta	(C)	bolivar	(D) dollar
3.	(A)	envelope	(B)	closing	(C)	signature	(D) heading
4.	(A)	advertisement	(B)	advertising	(C)	advertise	(D) advantage
5.	(A)	Mg.	(B)	Kg.	(C)	Dr.	(D) Cm.

FIGURE 2

Find the words related to the word on the left.

office:	telephone, teller, to type, camera, photocopy, to dictate
industry:	factory, faculty, to produce, proper, to manufacture, worker
accountant:	debits, to assert, assets, bookkeeping, to invent, entry
advertisement:	adventure, to promote, poster, to publicize, propaganda, to protect

The following activity called "The Think Tank" requires a student to provide a certain number of vocabulary items within a limited amount of time in response to a question.[3]

INSTRUCTOR: How many business terms can you brainstorm within one minute that begin with the letter "B"?

STUDENT: bank, bankruptcy, bonds, businessman, balance

There are numerous variations on this activity all of which help the student categorize vocabulary.

How many business terms can you brainstorm within one minute that begin with (supply a letter of the alphabet)?

How many words do you know associated with transportation / industry / real estate / insurance / advertising?

How many business machines can you name?

How many U.S. firms can you name that have branches in France / Spain / Germany / Brazil / Mexico?

This activity can also be done in pairs or groups and can serve as a written assignment as well.

In the assignment "Report to the Board of Directors"[4] the student is required to prepare a written report or composition of about one page in length on an aspect of the topic currently being studied in class. After preparing the written report the student must then give an oral report to the "board of directors" (his insturctor and classmates). The student is required to speak for one minute on his topic without pausing and without the use of notes. This particular assignment/activity helps the student use the new vocabulary in both a written and oral situation.

Many variations on cloze procedures can also help students master vocabulary. In the following exercise students must mentally fill in the missing letters in the words as they read the paragraph aloud. While the activity seems simple, it requires mastery of vocabulary and structures and is, thus, most effectively used after students have already become familiar with the vocabulary of the current lesson. The activity encourages reading fluency by having the student focus on entire words rather than individual letters or syllables. The exercise can also serve as a type of spelling test if students write in the missing letters.

FIGURE 3

Variation 1: Read the following paragraph aloud as you mentally supply the missing letters in the words.

Variation 2: Write in the missing letters in the words of the following paragraph.

The co_pu_er is r_pid_y b_co_ing a ne_es_ity in t_e m_der_ bu_in_ss _ffi_e. A c_m_ut_r ca_ p_rfo_m a _ariet_ of f_nc_ions wi_h g_eat s_eed _nd a_cura_y. A_th_ugh man_ c_mp_t_rs c_n be _xpe_sive to p_rch_se, the_ _fte_ p_y for t_emsel_es in a s_ort pe_iod of _ime b_ca_se t_ey _re c_pa_le of do_ng _he _ork of s_er_l e_pl_yees.

The group activity "Business Survey" combines reading, writing and speaking practice with the vocabulary.[5] Each student is given a copy of a questionnaire such as the one illustrated below. The student must then orally interview classmates and write down the name of a person that qualifies for each description. After each classmember has completed the questionnaire, "de-brief" by asking various students to name a person that qualifies for each description. Students should answer in complete sentences. Questionnaires on a variety of topical vocabulary can be prepared; review surveys combining vocabulary from several chapters are also very effective.

FIGURE 4

BUSINESS SURVEY

1. Someone who wants to work in a bank.

2. Someone who has just opened a savings account.

3. Someone who doesn't have a checking account.

4. Someone who has several credit cards.

5. Someone who has stock in an important firm.

6. Someone who has a student loan.

7. Someone who has always pays cash.

8. Someone who has no debts.

9. Someone who has relatives that work in a bank.

10. Someone who has a mortgage.

In the activity Jigsaw Puzzle[6] each student in a small group is given a card with a word written on it. Students take turns describing or defining that word to the members of the group without using the word directly. A "secretary" writes down each word as it is guessed. When all words have been successfully communicated, the group takes the first letter of each word and unscrambles them to form a "group word". For example, six students might be given the following words to describe:

INDIVIDUAL WORDS	GROUP WORD
check	
receipt	
earnings	CREDIT
deposit	
interest	
transaction	

Note that all the individual words are categorized so that they relate to the resultant group word. In this activity, the student is developing paraphrasing skills and practicing new vocabulary while using the target language to solve a problem.

In the activity "Multi-national Corporation"[7] students must use the target language to bring together for a sales meeting the various employees of a fictitious corporation with branches in many countries. The game consists of a set of cards depicting employees. Each card has a description of the student card-holder (oneself) and of the employee the student is seeking. Each person who is seeking another employee is also being sought. Groups of four, five, and six members are created by using information such as that given in the sample cards of Figure 5.

FIGURE 5

THE MULTI-NATIONAL CORPORATION

ME	ACCOUNTANT
Mexican	Mexican
54 years old	36 years old
Buenos Aires	Santiago
Own computer firm	University degree
Large estate	Apartment
Play polo	Swims & skis

ME	SALES MANAGER
Mexican	Colombian
36 years old	43 years old
Santiago	Lima
University degree	House
Apartment	3 cars
Swim & ski	Plays tennis

ME	COMPUTER SPECIALIST
Colombian	28 years old
43 years old	Mexican
Lima	San José
House	Apartment
3 cars	2 University degrees
Play tennis	Plays chess

ME	PRESIDENT
28 years old	Mexican
Mexican	54 years old
San José	Buenos Aires
Apartment	Own computer firm
2 University degrees	Large estate
Play chess	Plays polo

Before beginning the game count out how many students will be playing and then determine which sets of cards to use.

To begin play, shuffle the cards you have chosen to use and distribute one card per student. Then, tell the students to question everyone else in the classroom in order to find the other employees in their corporation. After students have located their fellow employees, they can create names and a short biographical sketch for each other and introduce the corporation to the entire class.

2. Teaching Business Correspondence

An important component of the foreign language business course should be information on how to apply for available positions. Assignments on the reading and writing of business letters and documents correspond well with the teaching of job application skills.

Students must first learn the basics of letter writing in the target language before proceding with the unit on job application. Most foreign language business textbooks contain a chapter on the reading and writing of business correspondence and provide sample letters and a variety of exercises and assignments dealing with the formulaic expressions, standard abbreviations, and business letter form. Supplemental information on letter writing can be provided by using materials such as James Brown's Opciones: Spanish Correspondence[8] or any number of other available manuals.[9]

After learning how to write standard business letters, students can then learn the procedures for applying for positions. In order to

teach the reading of classified advertisements in the target language, provide students with various copies of sample classified advertisements found in foreign newspapers or in foreign language newspapers published in the United States. Require students to make a list containing five to seven positions for which they are qualified and in which they are interested; the students should note the name and address of the firms for the list will be used in future assignments in which students will apply for the positions they have chosen.

Another related assignment is the prepartion of a résumé in the target language to be used for job applications. It has been my experience that most students in the foreign language business courses have never prepared a résumé in any language; thus, we are faced with the double task of teaching them how to prepare a résumé and then how to write the document in the target language. Since students have little knowledge about résumé writing, it seems appropriate to instruct them in the writing of the newer skills-oriented résumé than in the more traditional résumé emphasizing experience. As can be seen in the following traditional résumé of Figure 6, a recent college graduate with little job experience does not fare well on paper.

FIGURE 6

TRADITIONAL RESUME

PERSONAL DATA:
Mary Ann Smith
123 Main Street
Dearborn, Michigan 12345
(313) 987-6543
Married, no children

EDUCATION:
Training Program in Career Counseling and Development
Crystal Institute McLean, Virginia Summer, 1982
B.A. in International Studies
University of Michigan-Dearborn June, 1982
Summer Program in Puebla, Mexico in conjunction with
Wichita State University Summer, 1981

EXPERIENCE:
Cashier McDonald's Restaurant 1976-1977
Waitress Elias Brothers Restaurant 1977-1978
Salesperson /Clerk Winkleman's Women's Clothing Store
1979-1981

OTHER INTERESTS:
Aerobic dancing
Coach for junior high girls gymnastics team 1978-Present
Volunteer at Community Hospital 1976-Present
Travel in Europe Summer, 1980
Travel in Mexico Summer, 1981

ORGANIZATIONS:
Member: University of Michigan-Dearborn Ski Club
University of Michigan-Dearborn Marketing Club
First Methodist Church Choir
Treasurer, University of Michigan-Dearborn International Club

REFERENCES:
Dr. Robert Jones, Professor of Spanish, University of Michigan-Dearborn
Dr. Henry Woods, Professor of Accounting, University of Michigan-Dearborn
Rev. Thomas Anderson, Pastor First Methodist Church

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FIGURE 7

SKILLS-ORIENTED RESUME

PERSONAL DATA:
Mary Ann Smith
123 Main Street
Dearborn, Michigan 12345
(313) 987-6543

EDUCATION:
Training Program in Career Counseling and Development
Crystal Institute McLean, Virginia Summer, 1982
B.A. in International Studies University of Michigan-Dearborn
June, 1982
Summer Program in Puebla, Mexico in conjunction with
Wichita State University Summer, 1981

JOB EXPERIENCE:
Cashier McDonald's Restaurant 1976-1977
Waitress Elias Brothers Restaurant 1977-1978
Salesperson/clerk Winkleman's Women's Clothing Store
1979-1981

QUALIFICATIONS:
Knowledge of Spanish--Rating 3+ on Government Proficiency Exam
Adept at writing and translating business letters and
correspondence English/Spanish and Spanish/English
Outstanding ability to write and present concise, well-
organized reports
Adept at accounting
Experience with handing large amounts of money, taking
inventory, keeping financial records and preparing
and administering a budget
Experience with instructing and coaching
Experience in training new sales personnel
Ability to encourage and guide others
Proven ability in relating well to other people; displaying
tact and diplomacy on the job
Abiltiy to work well as a team member
Experience with computers and programming
Expertise with standard office machines--typewriter,
dictaphone, calculator

OBJECTIVE:
Position as an accountant in a firm doing business
with Spanish-speaking countries; desire to travel
or re-locate where accounting and Spanish skills
could be utilized.

However, in Figure 7 that same job applicant appears to have much more to offer a prospective employer when her qualifications are expanded into skills learned from previous job, school and life experiences. Richard N. Bolles' What Color is Your Parachute? and Tom Jackson's The Perfect Resume are excellent resource books for learning about the skills-oriented résumé and job hunting tactics in general.[10]

After the students have learned how to prepare a skills-oriented résumé, have then prepare a résumé in the target language. Undoubtedly, several drafts of the document will be needed before a final, polished version is obtained.

A third written assignment completes the job application unit. The students will learn to write a letter of introduction to accompany the résumé. The letter in the target language should be addressed to one of the firms on the previously prepared "job list" and should request an interview. Most foreign language business textbooks and letter-writing manuals contain sample letters of introduction for use with this assignment. The letter of introduction and résumé can actually be sent to the firm or not as the instructor desires.

3. Teaching Business Practices

A third major component of the foreign language business course is devoted to the teaching of business practices. Many of the readings in the typical foreign language business textbook are devoted to the teaching of this cultural component; business administration, organization and operations within the native and target cultures are compared and contrasted. Additional information, exercises and activities for the

teaching of business practices can be found in Business Case Studies and in Export Marketing; both texts exist in a French, German and Spanish version.[11]

One of the best activities for introducing cultural information via business practices is related to the unit on advertising and publicity, a standard chapter in most foreign language business texts. Using advertisements cut from target culture magazines or slides prepared from those advertisements, comment on advertising techniques, logos, slogans, and general appeal. After students have read and learned about advertising in general, provide each student with a current magazine or newspaper from the target culture. Students must then prepare a four-to-five minute oral report on the advertisements found within. Instruct the students to comment on the types of products advertised, to what age, economic or education group the ad is appealing and what methods are used in the advertisement message. Students should also find advertisements for similar products in U. S. magazines or newspapers and compare the format and message. In addition, students should note products that are advertised in one culture but not in the other. This assignment not only teaches about advertising practices in general but also provides much cross-cultural information.

Many other business practices can be learned via role-playing techniques. Banking procedures such as opening and closing accounts, applying for a business loan, changing money, or rectifying a clerical error can be re-created to fit role-playing situations. Students should work in pairs as they re-enact a given situation. If there are native

speakers among your students, use them in the role of the bank employees. A native "employee" creates a more realistic situation and the language ability of the student will allow him or her to question and answer more spontaneously which in turn forces the non-native student to think and answer more rapidly in the target language.

The aforementioned activities and assignments are just a few of the many that can be created for the teaching of business terminology, correspondence and practices. If the idea that the foreign language business course is primarily a composition and conversation course is kept in mind, then the instructor can learn to adapt and vary many existing exercises and activities to a business setting. As a result, the business class will be more effective and enjoyable for the students and the instructor's job will be greatly simplified.

Emily Spinelli

University of Michigan-Dearborn

NOTES

[1]W. A. Bousfield, "The Occurrence of Clustering in the Recall of Randomly Arranged Associates," Journal of General Psychology, 49 (1953) 229-40.

[2]For a more detailed discussion of categorical clustering see Howard H. Keller, New Perspectives on Teaching Vocabulary, Language in Education: Theory and Practice No 8, Arlington, Virginia: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1978 and Raymond Moody, "Scheduling Drills and Teaching Vocabulary," Hispania, 65 (December, 1982), 609-14.

[3]"The Think Tank" is based on "Pressure Cooker" by Robert DiDonato as explained in his workshop "Developing the Speaking Skill: Pre-Communicative Activities for the Language Class" presented at the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, St. Louis: March 24, 1983.

[4]"Report to the Board of Directors" is based on an idea presented by Robert DiDonato at the Central States Workshop mentioned in Note 3.

[5]"Business Survey" is a variation on the activity "Lists" which was developed by Barbara Snyder and explained in her workshop "Communicative Skill-Building Activities in the Language Classroom" presented at the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, St Louis: March 25, 1983.

[6]Alice Omaggio developed the game "Jigsaw Puzzle"; it is described in her article "Using Games and Interaction Activities for the Development of Functional Proficiency in a Second Language," Canadian Modern Language

Review, 38 (March, 1982), 520-521.

[7]The "Multi-National Corporation" is a variation of the game "Mais vous êtes ma femme!" developed by Alice Omaggio and explained in "Using Games and Interaction Activities," Canadian Modern Language Review, 542-544.

[8]James W. Brown, Opciones: Spanish Correspondence, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York: ACTFL Materials Center.

[9]Letter-writing manuals for Spanish include J. Bray and M. Gómez-Sánchez, Spanish in the Office/Español para oficinas, London: Longman Group Ltd., 1980; Mary H. Jackson, Guide to Correspondence in Spanish, Skokie, Illinois: National Textbook Co. Passport Books, 1982; Barbara Steel de Meza, Business Letter Handbook: Spanish/English, New York: Regents Publishing Co., Inc., 1973.

[10]The following books and pamphlets contain excellent resource materials on résumé writing and job applications. Bolles, Richard N., Tea Leaves: A New Look at Résumés, Berkeley, California: Ten Speed Press; Bolles, Richard N., What Color is Your Parachute?, Berkeley, Calf.: Ten Speed Press, 1983; John C. Crystal and Richard N. Bolles, Where Do I Go From Here With My Life?, Berkeley, Calf.: Ten Speed Press, 1974; Tom Jackson, The Perfect Resume, Garden City, New York: Anchor Press/ Doubleday, 1981; Richard C. Lathrop, Who's Hiring Who, Berkeley, Calf.: Ten Speed Press, 1977.

[11]Spanish business practices can be found in Sebastian Balfour, Business Case Studies: Spanish, London: Longman Group Ltd., 1982 and M. G. Thomas, Export Marketing: Spanish, London: Longman Group Ltd., 1978.